

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 and 12 are pending in the present application, Claim 11 having been canceled, Claims 1-8 and 10 amended, Claim 12 added by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the abstract was objected to; Claims 1, 2, and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Maeda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,796,630, herein "Maeda"); Claims 3-6 and 11 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form; and Claim 10 was allowed.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, independent Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite the allowable subject matter of Claim 11 and Claim 11 has been canceled. Further, Claims 1-8 and 10 have been amended to better conform with U.S. claim drafting practice. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding rejection on the merits of the claims is moot and independent Claims 1 and 7 and each of the claims depending therefrom are allowable.

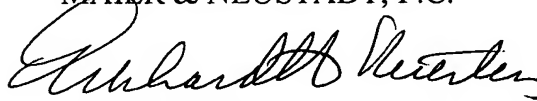
Regarding the objection to the abstract, the abstract has been amended to correct the informality indicated in the outstanding Office Action. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

New Claim 12 has been added to set forth the invention in a varying scope and finds support in the originally filed specification. In particular, new Claim 12 corresponds to Claim 1 but has been drafted to not use means-plus-function terminology. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 12 is allowable for similar reasons as discussed above.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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